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9TH DISTRICT, NORTH CAROLINA

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Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

June 23, 2010

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The Honorable Janet Ann Napolitano  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Napolitano:

Former intelligence officials have suggested that Hezbollah has increased its presence in Central and South America, and are now operating in Mexico and on our southern border. Even more troubling is that I believe Hezbollah and the drug cartels may be operating as partners on our border.

I believe we need to do more intelligence gathering on Hezbollah's presence on our border. I therefore request that you form a Homeland Security task force to engage US and Mexican law enforcement and border patrol officials about Hezbollah's presence, activities, and connections to gangs and drug cartels.

This task force should develop a public report on this issue, so that the American public understands these threats. They should also develop a report for intelligence officials and policymakers, complete with policy recommendations on how we can clamp down on Hezbollah's operations on our border.

Thanks to the good work done by the Treasury Department, terrorist organizations like Hezbollah have found it increasingly hard to obtain or transfer funds through financial institutions. As a result, Hezbollah has increased their presence in drug trafficking to obtain funds that cannot be traced.

Many experts believe Hezbollah and drug cartels have been loosely working together for decades. We have seen their cooperation in countries across South America, particularly the tri-border area of South America (bounded by Puerto Iguazu, Argentina; Ciudad del Este, Paraguay; and Foz do Iguazo, Brazil). Hezbollah operates almost like a Mafia family in this region, often demanding protection money and "taxes" from local inhabitants.

In fact, while speaking about Hezbollah and the drug cartels, former Chief of Operations for the Drug Enforcement Administration, Michael Braun stated: "Hezbollah relies on the same criminal weapons smugglers, document traffickers and transportation experts as the drug cartel... They work together; they rely on the same shadow facilitators. One way or another they are all connected."

The connection between Hezbollah and the drug cartels has seemed to grow over the past few years. This may be especially true on the US Southern border.

Across states in the Southwest, well trained officials are beginning to notice the tattoos of gang members in prisons are being written in Farsi. We have typically seen tattoos in Arabic, but Farsi implies a Persian influence that can likely be traced back to Iran and its proxy army, Hezbollah. These tattoos in Farsi are almost always seen in combination with gang or drug cartel tattoos. These combinations have been increasing

in number and point to the fact that these criminals are tied to both Hezbollah and gangs and drug cartels. I have attached photos to provide examples.

Former intelligence officials have pointed to the terrain that makes up our border, especially in the San Diego border sector, as a reason why drug cartels have been partnering with Hezbollah. This terrain is very much like the areas around Israel's borders. As we well know, Hezbollah is extremely skilled in the construction of tunnels. Israel has time and again found Hezbollah tunnels leading into Israel, some of which are large enough to accommodate trucks. Likewise, these intelligence officials say that the drug cartels, in an effort to dig larger and more effective tunnels, are employing the expertise of Hezbollah. For their expertise, Hezbollah could be receiving a cut of the drug money or even be helping put cash up front to assist in the overall drug operations.

Iranian President Ahmadinejad and Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez appear have formed a tight bond. This is concerning on many levels, but it may also explain the recent rise of Iranian nationals being apprehended by well trained border agents. Experts believe Iranian agents and members of Hezbollah are going to Venezuela to learn Spanish. When somewhat fluent, they obtain false documents in hopes of crossing the US border as a Hispanic. If stopped by border agents when trying to cross, they try to pass off as Mexican. Only well-trained border agents can detect that their Spanish accent is Venezuelan, not Mexican. If this is not detected they are merely sent back into Mexico where they try to cross into the US again, rather than being detained for more questioning.

The Venezuela and Hezbollah false documentation connection is further supported by NY County District Attorney Robert M. Morgenthau's comments at a Brookings Institution speech on December 8, 2009. He stated: "Particularly alarming, within the ranks of Chavez's corrupt government lie supporters of Hezbollah. In fact, Mr. El Aissami, who at one time headed Onidex, the Venezuelan passport and naturalization agency inside the interior ministry, is suspected of having issued passports to members of Hamas and Hezbollah." If officials within Venezuela are willingly giving away passports to Hezbollah, it stands to reason they can help them with a variety of other fraudulent documentation.

Further, some authorities have opined that Hezbollah and other Islamic radicals have been welcomed into Mexico and other Latin American countries by the cartels because of their access to cheap narcotics from Afghanistan. One high ranking Mexican Army officer, who asked not to be named for security reasons, states they believe Hezbollah may be training the Mexican drug cartels' enforcers in the art of bomb making. This might lead to Israel-like car bombings of Mexican/USA border personnel or National Guard units in the border regions. This militant threat could be exacerbated by the current tensions between the US and Iran, since Iran directs Hezbollah.

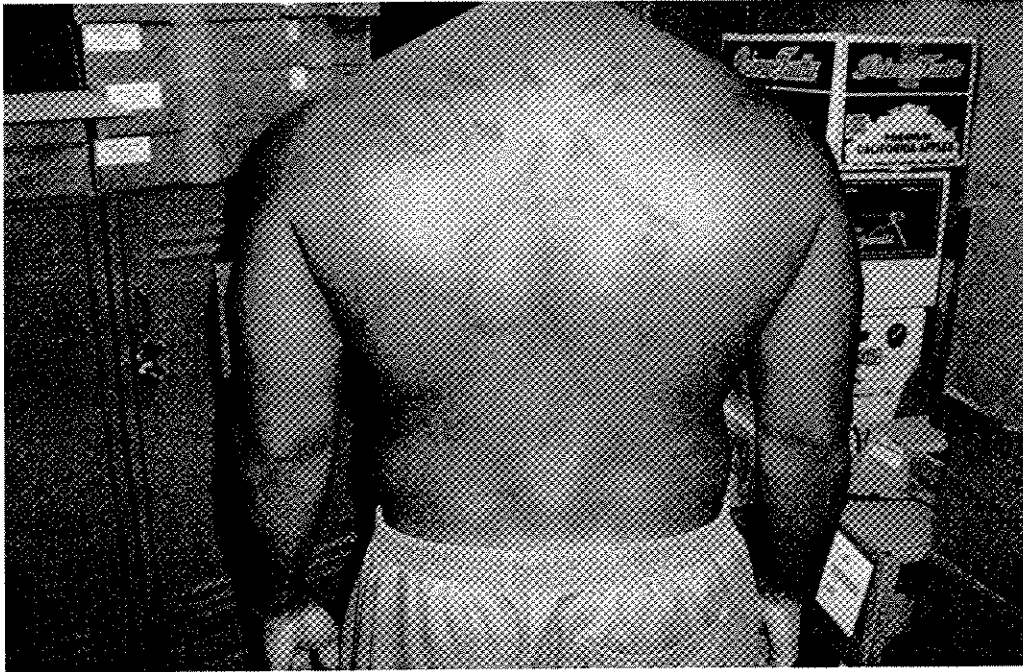
A taskforce could explore all these issues. It is vital we know what is happening on our border, especially as crime and violence continue to rise there and as terrorist plots and threats are increasing inside the US.

I thank you for your attention to this vital national security issue, and hope that you can initiate a task force on this as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Sue Myrick".

Sue Myrick  
Member of Congress



California State Prison—Sacramento County—Hezbollah tattoo on back.



Tattoo of the “two faces” of MS13. The writing is Iranian Farsi. Experts say it translates to MS13s name.